

PLANNING CONCERNS IN SOUTH BELFAST



South Belfast is a desirable location in Belfast, and for good reason. It has a thriving social life, educational institutions from nursery to university, beautiful surroundings and attractive properties.

However the issues around planning and development in the area are a major concern to local residents, who feel the unique local character of South Belfast is being eroded by the over development of new accommodation complexes. While we all welcome a degree of progress and growth in our neighbourhoods, it is imperative that established districts such as South Belfast are able to retain the standards that have been in place for generations to come, ensuring that the value in environment, amenities, local schooling and housing is not compromised.

Anna is dealing with many cases in the constituency area where local residents feel their way of life is being threatened by the rampant development of the area. These include the locals of the Piney Hills Area, who feel their long term homes are under imminent threat from numerous apartment proposals, planned for simultaneous construction and the members of the Deramore Residents Association, who's AGM Anna attended in May of this year. Unfortunately cases on this scale are not isolated, and Anna frequently deals with groups and individuals who are detrimentally affected by new developments to try and reach a resolution that doesn't compromise the constituent's way of life.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Belfast City Council - 028 9032 0202

Belfast Health & Social Care Trust
- 028 9056 5656

Citizen's Advice Bureau - 028 9032 9133

Consumer Council - 028 9067 2488

Equality Commission - 028 90 500 600

Housing Rights Service - 028 9024 5640

Housing Executive - 0844 8920900

Law Centre NI - 028 9024 4401

Planning Service - 028 9025 2800

Police Service for Northern Ireland

Lisburn Road - 028 9025 9850

Donegall Pass - 028 9025 9747

Ballynafeigh - 028 9025 9747

Musgrave Street - 028 9070 0523

South Belfast Constituency News

Anna Lo
MBE MLA
Alliance Assembly Member



Dear Constituent,

First of all, I wish to thank all the constituents who voted for me in the election in March. Northern Ireland having its first ethnic Chinese parliamentarian in Europe was reported literally round the world from Japan to China, Russia, Europe and America.

Since the start of the Assembly, the Alliance Party MLAs have invited Green Party MLA Brian Wilson and independent MLA Dr Kieran Deeney to form the 'United Community' Group to act as the Opposition within the Assembly. Since devolution day, I have not only participated on various debates in the Chamber with my maiden speech on 'Affordable Housing' but also instigated two motions calling for all-party support for the Racial Equality Strategy and increased Arts Funding. I have also put forward many questions of concern from the constituency to the various Ministers at Question Time.

The Committees of Social Development, and Employment and Learning, of which I am a member, have been active in scrutinising the work of the two departments and listening to the voluntary sector on different issues ranging from the Further Education lecturers pay dispute to urban regeneration.

I have visited Queens University, Further Education colleges, Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations, several housing schemes and residents in Sunwich Street who were badly affected by this summer's flooding. Residents groups in Deramore, Stranmillis, Ballynafeigh, Lower Woodstock as well as lobbying groups such as the Fair Rates Campaign and 'Save Ormeau Park' have invited me to their meetings, which were all very informative. I also enjoyed the fun at the Sandy Row and West Belfast community festivals.

I have spoken at various functions on the importance of embracing diversity in our society, in Omagh, Strabane, and Londonderry/Derry and within the constituency in local schools and churches.

Promoting Northern Ireland in the global marketplace is also something I take great pleasure in doing. I narrated a documentary for the British Consul for an exhibition in China describing the attractions of the Province. On another occasion, the national Chinese Channel TV interviewed me on our growing political and social stability in a feature about Northern Ireland. I also hosted a lunch in Stormont for the new Chinese ambassador for the UK.

I wish to thank all those who have assisted me in the last few months but most of all I want to thank you, my constituents, for your continuing support. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance to you on any matter. My door is always open to everyone and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Anna Lo

STANDING OVATION FOR LO AT LIBERAL DEMOCRAT PARTY CONFERENCE

Anna Lo, David Ford, Leader and Gerry Lynch, Executive Director of the Alliance Party were invited to attend the Liberal Democratic Party Conference from Sunday 15th to Thursday 20th September 2007 in Brighton.

The trio made a twenty minute presentation giving a glimpse of the climate within the Assembly with highlights on some of the issues facing the Executive.

David Ford said, "We need to change politics and we need to radically change a society which is still bitterly divided. Divided societies don't work, as can be seen all over the world."

Anna Lo commented, "Our public finances are in a mess. Half our public spending comes from subsidies from Great Britain and 71% of our GDP is generated by the public sector! We must grow our economy and learn to stand on our own feet."

The presentation was very well received with enthusiastic applause for Anna. The group stepped off the stage in triumph amid a standing ovation



ANNA SPEAKS OUT FOR EQUALITY WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

People in Northern Ireland were invited to 'Stand-up for Human Rights' by attending an Amnesty International Conference in Belfast in September 2007 focusing on two campaigns: 'Stop Violence Against Women' and 'Human Rights for China'

In her address Anna stated "China's top priority at the moment is economic development and the government advocates that the end product of common prosperity justifies sacrificing the welfare of the individuals... The argument that economic development and the satisfaction of basic needs takes precedence over Human Rights and Democracy is flawed. There is no evidence anywhere that freedom of thought, speech and association deter economic growth and fundamental rights to existence. In fact, very often, it's the opposite."

Her speech was well received by the audience and she was also interviewed by BBC Radio Ulster on the subject.



HOW TO CONTACT ANNA LO Surgery Hours: Every Friday 10am - 1pm

If there is anything you would like Anna's help with you can contact her South Belfast Constituency Office:

South Belfast Constituency Office
88 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1HE

Tel: 028 9032 4274
OR 028 9033 0811
Fax: 028 9033 3147
Email: anna.lo@niassembly.gov.uk

FLOATING SURGERY

If you would like to host one of Anna's constituency surgeries in your community centre then please call the Constituency Office at the number listed above.

Designed by www.nomoreart.com

**INSIDE: YOUR TOP ISSUES | SAVE
ORMEAU PARK | MEETING THE
COMMUNITIES | PLANNING CONCERNS**

.....
CarbonNeutral® publication

Printed on Recycled Paper



LO SUPPORTS 'BALLYNAFEIGH SHARED NEIGHBOURHOOD WEEK'

Anna was delighted to be asked to take part in the 'Shared Neighbourhood Week' organised by the Ballynafeigh Community Development Association.

The week ran from Sunday 2nd September to Saturday 8th September and included a variety of events from street theatre, public debates, children's and young people's activities to cultural awareness sessions and a fireworks display. She attended the neighbourhood luncheon event in Cooke Church Hall on Tuesday 4th September where she was greeted by a group of Ballynafeigh locals eager to promote their diverse shared community. Anna delivered a speech to launch the event, focusing on the recent findings of the Deloitte 'Cost of Segregation' report which demonstrated the waste of public money in maintaining the division in our society by duplicating services for the two communities. The week's events were well attended and served to highlight the ongoing work in Ballynafeigh including a recent piece of community research conducted by Robin Wilson on behalf of BCDA, entitled "A Shared Today - Belfast's Ballynafeigh Neighbourhood" which outlined the community's unique history, diverse fabric and promising future.



Photo courtesy of the Community Telegraph

ORMEAU PARK UPDATE

Concerned residents of the 'Save Ormeau Park' group requested a meeting with Anna Lo MLA to discuss the topical National Stadium proposals and the subsequent implications for local green field site Ormeau Park.

As was expressed at the meeting which took place in Ballynafeigh Community Development Association on Wednesday 29th September, many local residents are anxious at the prospect of losing Ormeau Park which is widely recognised as a valuable community resource. The meeting, which was also attended by a number of Belfast City Councilors served as a platform for the group to debate the issue directly with Anna and the other representatives. Shortly after the meeting an announcement was made by the Belfast City Council that all current stadium proposals for the Ormeau Park site had been rejected and according to a further announcement made on 1st October 2007, the Council have commissioned a business plan to explore other potential sites in Belfast. Despite this declaration Ms Lo will continue to work in partnership with local residents to achieve a satisfactory conclusion for the whole community.

YOUR TOP ISSUES

Anna conducted a survey in South Belfast earlier in the year to help determine her constituents' key issues in the area. With over 2000 surveys completed we have collated the Top 5 issues concerning South Belfast Residents.

- 1. Traffic, Road Safety & Parking** – These are major issues for South Belfast constituents, and we regularly liaise with the Roads Service, Department of Environment, Department of Regional Development and the PSNI to ensure individual concerns and broader issues are dealt with effectively.
- 2. Crime** – Crime is unfortunately high in South Belfast, however we receive regular reports from the PSNI on how particular crimes are dealt with, and on police initiatives, and are of course happy to work with individuals on specific incidents.
- 3. Rates & Water Charges** – The Rates and Water Charges debate has been a long and controversial one and Anna has continued to call for a fairer system to be introduced for rates payers.
- 4. Anti-Social Behaviour** – This is a city wide problem, but is unfortunately particularly relevant to South Belfast residents. Anna works with the Universities, PSNI, local residents and community groups to combat the issue.
- 5. Waste Management** – Waste collection and management affects the domestic and commercial residents of South Belfast and we regularly communicate with the Belfast City Council to ensure action is taken on any sanitation concerns.

LO COMBATS HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Anna Lo has welcomed the announcement by the PSNI stating that they are to open an office in Belfast to crackdown on human trafficking.

She stated that she is going to bring a motion to the Assembly to further highlight the distressing issue of people trafficking:

"I strongly welcome the news that the PSNI are opening a specialist unit in Belfast to focus specifically on combating human trafficking. I am also glad that they are taking a joined-up approach with police from the rest of the UK and Ireland to combat this problem. It is essential that all the authorities in the region work together on this.

"Last week, we had a massive response to an Alliance petition against human trafficking at Queen's University fresher's fair. I am going to put a motion before the Assembly on this issue. This practice wrecks people's lives and everything possible must be done to stamp out this abuse and exploitation

"A tragic story that highlights the horrific nature of human trafficking is that of a young Chinese woman, Qu Mei Na. She was murdered in North Belfast three years ago, and was thought to be a victim of human trafficking."

ANNA TEAMS UP WITH THE IFA

Donegal Celtic Football Club, new to the Irish League, enlisted the help of Anna to hold a cross community event at their grounds on Wednesday 5th September.



'Chinatown Day 2007' marked the first of the club's planned annual cross community events, featuring a friendly football match between the Donegal Celtic team and the Chinese Community team, entertainment from Alan Lui and his Chinese Lion Dancers, and a fair of Chinese crafts and food. The event was a great success and generously attended by members of the local and Chinese communities. The event was supported by the IFA, with endorsement from IFA Chief executive and several local businesses, who agreed it would pave the way for further cross community and cultural diversity occasions.

"The evening was a fantastic success, and it was wonderful to see such a diverse group of people enjoying each others company. It proves that we are taking steps towards integration and becoming a 'normal' society" – Anna Lo MLA

Anna has also praised the work of the IFA on their 'Football for All' campaign which heralded the groundbreaking 'World United' team. In particular Anna has commended the work of the IFA Community Relations department for spearheading several initiatives to engage the diverse communities of Northern Ireland and encourage good relations through football.



TAUGHMONAGH WELCOMING ANNA...

In September, Anna visited Taughmonagh on two occasions to meet local people in the area. She visited the Taughmonagh Community Centre and Philip Hamilton, the centre worker, showed her round the premises and introduced her to the staff and children in the summer scheme and crèche.

A couple of weeks later, she was invited by Pauline Irvine, the Malton Fold sheltered housing scheme co-ordinator, to draw the ballots and present prizes to the lucky winners in a jumbo sale in Malton to raise money for activities for the residents.

Anna mingled with the residents, friends and families of the housing scheme who gave her a splendid welcome as warm as the sunshine that was shining all afternoon that day. Anna was delighted to have another opportunity to meet local residents and was very impressed by the beautifully maintained gardens and bungalows of Malton Fold.

TACKLING STUDENT ISSUES

Anna attended the Queen's University Belfast Fresher's Fayre on Wednesday 26th September as part of Fresher's Week in the Students' Union Building.

She was greeted by hundreds of students who passed through the fayre, picking up information on the various groups and societies that the university has to offer. Anna was happy to speak to passers by at the Young Alliance stall, where she discussed a range of issues high on the student agenda, from tuition fees and student loans to life in South Belfast. The day provided an opportunity for students to talk frankly and directly with Anna, and the result of this was apparent in the substantial signatures collected for the petition on Human Trafficking, an issue Anna is passionate about and has worked extensively on.

Student Transport Concessions: Anna is in support of the introduction of public transport concessions for students and has continually lobbied the Department of Regional Development on this, having asked the Minister Conor Murphy about implementing concessions through Translink for students and young people.

Anti-Social Behaviour: Anna has liaised regularly with the students, residents and institutions in the University area to try and tackle the issue of anti-social behaviour. A copy of the QUB student disciplinary code is available from the University on 02890 245133

Student Fees & Debt: Anna has campaigned on the issue of student debt and tuition fees since entering the Northern Ireland assembly and has called upon the executive to lessen the financial burden upon those entering higher education by abolishing tuition fees and raising the student loan repayment trigger to a £23000 salary.